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not necessitated by its use as the standard of value. But, as Mr. Phin knows, it is exceedingly dangerous to make experiments with a country's currency, even along the line of correct theory, and in a democracy it is not safe to make any radical change until it is understood and approved by the average intelligence of the country. However, it is to be hoped that Mr. Phin's book will be read by the farmers and mechanics of the country. It will raise the average of intelligence on the money question, and so bring nearer the day when it will be worth while to discuss at length the practical details of his plan for a common-sense currency.

University of Pennsylvania.

JOS. FRENCH JOHNSON.

Natural Rights: a Criticism of Some Political and Ethical Conceptions. By DAVID G. RITCHIE, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of St. Andrews. Pp. xvi, 304. Price, \$2.75. London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1895.

If ever there was a time when clear notions were needful as to the meaning and relevancy of that much-abused word "rights," it is the present, and if Professor Ritchie's treatment of this theme could only be popularized it might help very materially. Yet we would not give the impression that this work is reactionary in tendency. On the contrary, its spirit is eminently sympathetic and is most tolerant where it is most critical; and if Professor Ritchie has political prepossessions of his own, his habit of dealing equal strokes all round effectually protects him from the aspersion of prejudice. Perhaps the best possible commendation of the work is the fact that it will neither please nor displease any party or school completely. Clearly, then, Professor Ritchie must be on the way of truth.

Of the two parts into which he divides the book—(1) the theory of natural rights historically considered, and (2) particular natural rights—that which is devoted to the practical aspects of the question at issue is by far the more valuable, yet everywhere he is suggestive and instructive. Passing under review the principles of 1789 which underlay the Declaration of the Rights of Man, he goes beyond Rousseau and Locke for a genesis. Far from believing that either of these can "claim the credit of having 'discovered the lost title-deeds of the human race,'" he holds that "The theory of natural rights is simply the logical outgrowth of the Protestant revolt against the authority of tradition, the logical outgrowth of the Protestant appeal to private judgment—*i. e.*, to the reason and conscience of the individual."

After a painstaking examination of the history of the ideas of "nature" in law and politics, we have a criticism of Rousseauism in a

chapter which is acute and trenchant, and of a light and witty style. The theoretical part of the work ends with an answer to the question, "What determines rights?" His view is that "the only law of nature to which we can listen must be such as will commend itself to our reason as the statement of the principles of a coherent and orderly society which will not throw away the hard-won achievements of man in his struggle with nature and with barbarism, and which will at the same time be progressive, in the sense of being capable of correcting its own faults. Any 'natural rights' which are incompatible with such a society are only another name for anarchy." Social utility is in fact the ultimate test of what is "right."

The specific "natural rights" which are considered in the second half of the book are the right of life, the right of liberty, with liberty of thought, toleration, the right of public meeting and association, freedom of contract, national freedom, etc., resistance to oppression, equality, the right of property and the right of pursuing and obtaining happiness. Though often treading upon controversial ground, Professor Ritchie throws out upon each of these questions suggestions which every reader will appreciate and value. The chapters on liberty and toleration are especially stimulating, the more so because they contain much to excite strenuous difference of opinion. (In passing, is not Kant's "universal law of right" as given on page 142 inferior to this passage from his "*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*," I Th., I Buch, i. Hauptst., sect. 7. "So act that the maxims of thy will may at all times serve as the principle of a universal law?") Finally, there is added in an appendix the text of various Declarations of Rights, beginning with that of Virginia and ending with the preamble to the French Constitution of 1848.

Professor Ritchie's treatment of his subject is systematic and thoroughly scholarly, and though by no means final it will be heartily welcomed by all students of contemporary movements of political and ethical thought. A healthy independence of judgment and a marked freedom from irritating dogmatism are amongst the qualifications which entitle him to speak and to claim a thoughtful hearing, while his attractive style makes the perusal of the book a source of pleasure as well as of profit.

WILLIAM HARBUTT DAWSON.

L'Europe et la Révolution Française. Par ALBERT SOREL. Première partie, *Les mœurs politiques et les traditions*; Deuxième partie, *La Chute de la Royauté*; Troisième partie, *La Guerre aux rois, 1792-1793*; Quatrième partie, *Les limites naturelles, 1794-1795*. Pp. 562, 574, 556 and 492. Price, 8 fr. per vol. Paris: Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1885-1893.